

4 April 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Staff Meeting Minutes of 4 April 1979

The Director was at his EOB office; Mr. Carlucci chaired the meeting.

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Parmenter advised that a Soviet aircraft carrier is making port calls in Africa, reflecting a further broadening of Soviet world influence.

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Alluding to Jack Anderson's column today (attached) alleging that he saw a report contending that Libya had an atomic bomb, Stein said he has never seen any such report.

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On hearing that Hitz would accompany the DCI on his call to Senator Inouye, Mr. Carlucci suggested that he have the Director advise Inouye about the reserve release.

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Hetu noted that UPI has expressed interest in the upcoming Agency testimony on firearms and FOIA and heard that Mr. Carlucci was not going. No one knew what had caused this misunderstanding. In response to Hetu's question, Hitz said that an unclassified statement would be made available on 5 April's testimony.

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Jack Anderson

Qaddafi Asks Why U.S. Backs Losers

There's a Middle East nightmare that causes the skin of our military strategists to creep. In this bad dream, the irreconcilable Libyan dictator, Muammar Qaddafi, gets his hands on some nuclear weapons and starts passing them out to Palestinian terrorists.

This is precisely what an intelligence report warns may happen this summer. The ominous report claims Qaddafi will soon test an atomic bomb in the Libyan desert.

At the Central Intelligence Agency, analysts are apprehensive but skeptical. It's certainly true that Qaddafi sent an emissary to Peking in 1970 to ask the late Premier Chou En-lai to sell Libya an atomic bomb. Indeed, intelligence reports claim that Qaddafi has continued his attempts to purchase nuclear weapons or the ingredients to produce them.

Late last year, the Soviet Union agreed to construct a nuclear reactor in Libya. An Arab source pointed out that India was able to build an atomic bomb from the byproducts of peaceful nuclear energy. "Was the world surprised when India did it? Should the world be surprised if Libya were to do it?" he asked rhetorically. "These things are not secrets any more."

CIA experts, nevertheless, doubt that Libya has the technology to manufacture nuclear weapons. And the terrible Qaddafi himself spoke reassuringly about the prospect. He characterized the introduction of nuclear weaponry into the Middle East as "suicide."

He told me, "It would destroy Israel and the Arab countries if this dangerous weapon is available in the area. It

would be very dangerous for all."

He alluded to reports that Israel has a secret nuclear arsenal. "We know that there is no one to help Israel develop nuclear weapons except America," he said, watching me with eyes fierce as a desert hawk's. "If Israel does have nuclear weapons, then America should be held responsible."

But Qaddafi seemed more concerned about a reported Egyptian build-up on his eastern border. It has been speculated that the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty might free President Anwar Sadat to attack Libya, which has been a thorn in his side.

"We expect this and we think—we are not sure—that America encourages this," the Libyan leader said. Later, he came back to the Egyptian threat and asked "what will be the position of America" in case of an attack upon Libya. "Do you think it would not support it and encourage it?" he demanded.

He spoke in English, lapsing into Arabic when the right words eluded him. Then an interpreter would finish his thought. "I can't understand how stupid the American policy is," he said. He cited the support of Sadat as another in a series of American alliances "with losing regimes."

"It's gambling," he said, "on the wrong horse—the shah of Iran, Lon Nol of Cambodia, the king of Morocco, Haile Selassie in Ethiopia. All of them, they lose, they lose."

Qaddafi predicted that "as the shah disappeared suddenly, Sadat will disappear, too." Then he promised that the U.S. weapons, now pouring into Egypt, will be turned against Israel. "Do you

think that this plane, the F5, will not be used against Israel one day by the Egyptians?" he demanded.

If Qaddafi is typical of the Arab leaders in the area, then the Israeli-Egyptian treaty will not bring peace to the Middle East. "All the Arab nations will fight together and support the Palestinian peoples," he said. "And all the arms in the area from the Americans and other countries will be used in this struggle."

Qaddafi had urged me to come to Tripoli to discover for myself whether he was as bad as I had written. I had characterized him as "one of the world's most irresponsible rulers." I had accused him of arming terrorists and conspiring with the likes of Uganda's Idi Amin.

"The information you have published about us is all wrong information," he chided. He accused me of relying upon "Israeli" and "intelligence" sources. "If you understand us only through the Israelis," he said, "it is your problem. Israel is our enemy."

He also lectured me against listening to the CIA. "A considerable journalist person like you," he said, "must not get his information from sources like intelligence sources. You must get your knowledge and information from the true sources."

Muammar Qaddafi's heart, no doubt, is true. He has not lavished his nation's oil wealth upon himself as other oil potentates have done. He has spent billions to improve the lot of the poor in Libya. He has spent billions, too, to arm himself and his adherents for the final struggle against Israel.